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Council may re-think plans for Euston site

LABOUR controlled Camden council may show a dramatic change of heart over its decision to develop Tolmers Square, Euston, with Joe Levy's Stock Conversion and Investment Trust.

Since the council's community planning and resources committee decided last week to reject a non-profit development scheme for the 11-acre site, two Labour party branches have condemned the decision and a Camden resident has served the council with a writ.

Hampstead Labour Party voted overwhelmingly to urge the council to reverse its decision while St Pancras North party executive voted unanimously to petition Camden to stop the Levy scheme going ahead.

Profit

Mr Nicholas Tomalin, a journalist from Gloucester Crescent, Camden Town, has asked the High Court to declare that Camden is not acting in the best interests of the ratepayers in going ahead with the joint development with Stock Conversion.

Claudius Properties, a company set up by Christopher Booker and Bemie Gray, has proposed that it would develop the 250,000 square feet of shops and offices planned for Tolmer Square and used for profit—up to £20,000,000—to subsidise the con-

struction of 474 council houses on the site.

But to do this, Camden has to break off negotiations with Stock Conversion on a similar scheme and ask the Environment Secretary to sanction the compulsory purchase of half the Tolmer Square site, already owned by Stock Conversion.

Councillors who rejected this scheme told Labour Party branches this week that the Tory government was unlikely to approve the compulsory purchase

orders and Camden would lose the houses or suffer years of delay in their construction.

But Mr Beverley Rowe, chairman of St Pancras North Labour Party, said: "We feel this is the opportunity to make a stand against developers and introduce a new form of non-profit development."

Council members who support that view hope to persuade the Labour group that it is not too late to stop the Stock Conversion deal.

CAMDEN JOURNAL

He's going! But some still want to have a good go at Joe

A HAPPY retirement to Joe Levy from one and all at the Town Hall, Euston Road. Among those who may be wishing the genial property developer of Tolmers Square a happy retirement from his estate agents firm, D. E. and J. Levy next month, is Labour councillor Mr Ivor Walker.

Mr Walker — one of our Labour councillors who voted to stick with Mr Levy's Stock Conversion and Investments Trust Ltd on the Tolmers Square Development — tells me that he is very tempted to accept an invitation he recently received to Mr Levy's retirement party at the plush Dorchester Hotel, next month.

He is consulting his Labour colleagues about whether he should attend. None of them, it seems, have been honoured with an invitation, and the

advice of some of them as to what he should do with the invitation could not possibly be recorded in this — a family newspaper. In fact some of their comments, and theories as to why Mr Walker alone should receive such an invitation, are very uncharitable indeed.

"I personally don't take the attitude that Joe Levy or any other property developer is an ogre to be feared," Mr Walker told me. "To hear some of my fellow Labour councillors talk, you'd think he was something special. I don't like what he does, and I would tell him what I thought of him and his organisation if I went."

"It'll be my decision in the end, of course," he said. "But I'm interested in what people think. Why don't you ask your readers?" Dare I ask?

